

FIRST GRADE SOUP

A Year of Simple School Cooking
to Get Kids Excited About Real Food

By Kim Foster, Vanessa Miller +
the Children of Central Park East II in NYC
2012-2013. (Reboot 2023)



Introduction

The first time you cook soup with first graders they are very very suspect of what you are doing. Very.

There are green things in the soup and a lot of them have never seen some of the ingredients, like clams and tongue. Some ate, some didn't that first time we made pozole. But the purpose of this endeavor is repetition. You don't get them the first time, you get them the next time and the time after that.

Soup is ubiquitous, a Friday tradition. That's the goal.

Every Friday in my daughter, Edie's, first grade class, at a small school within a big school, called Central Park East II in East Harlem, we made soup every Friday. Her teacher Vanessa allowed me to drag an electric burner, pots pans and tools across Central Park and up four flights of stairs, to join the kids for a weekly soup session. The kids who finished their reading, cycled in and out of the soup kitchen, a tiny section of the classroom next to an electrical outlet, where we chopped,

steamed, sauteed, stirred and browned ingredients into something tasty and nourishing.

The idea she had, back in September, 2012, was simple - every kid would get a soup week. Families would contribute a soup recipe – one their child loves, or is part of their family's culture, or passed down from generations or something they love to eat.

We would talk about the soup in the big circle in the classroom, use it to help the kids tell a story about themselves, who they are, where they came from, and what they eat at the family table.



Soup as a way to tell their stories

But it was bigger than that. Vanessa believed that just being around food - touching the chicken carcasses, listening to the vegetables simmering in fat, standing on tiptoes and looking into the big stock pot, and letting that steam waft up into our faces, smelling that catfish or those crabs or those oysters cooking - that all of it would help kids become natural eaters.

She figured that being around cooking on a regular basis, as if it were just a thing they did, like reading or tying their shoes, that the ubiquitousness of it all would make them more at home with tasting, trying, being adventurous. That cooking and eating would be second nature, just because they were around it.

She banked on the fact that if they were around it enough, they would fight over who got the most oysters in their gumbo. That maybe, they would choose crab over cupcakes. That maybe they would surprise themselves on a constant basis.

And all of this happened. Even though very few kids wanted to try the Cream of Tomato soup, they mostly all lapped it up when we reintroduced it at the end of the year. Just being around soup made them want to eat soup.

And soup is a big win for almost all households that have working kitchens (remember lots of people do not) because having a tiny bit of bouillon on hand and a swift clean out of the fridge of every wilting vegetable and meat scrap can be a nourishing, low cost dinner in less than a half hour.

This project can be as simple or elaborate as time, money and effort allow. My advice is to always keep it simple so that no one feels like they have an extra job. This is supposed to be fun. And it's supposed to be an investment in turning kids and families away from processed food and towards the joys of cooking and eating soup in the most fun way possible.

Just to mention, most all of the kids in this PDF are grown or nearly so, most likely graduating high school next year. Time flies. I hope this brings you as much joy as it brought Edie, Vanessa and I.

- Kim

PS: The photo: Vanessa doing what she does best.

Contents

STOCKS, BROTHS + BOUILLON

- Simple Chicken Stock
- Simple Beef Stock
- Simple Shrimp Stock
- Simple Vegetable Broth
- Simple Vegetable Bouillon

THE SOUPS

- Juan's Turkey Pozole
- Devon's Beef Noodle Pho
- Justin's Hearty Chicken Soup
- Kiley's Matzo Ball Soup
- Jacob's Won-Ton Soup
- Jashcelyn's Celery Pesto Soup with Barley
- Nico's Ring Noodle Soup
- Ava's Scottish Tattie Soup
- Nabrakissa's Cream of Garlic-Tomato Soup
- Edie's Super-Famous Clam Chowder
- Randall's Island Water Creature Gumbo
- Lael's Turkey Sausage & Eggplant Chili Grosso
- Cold Summer Carrot Soup

Stock

Although making your own stock can feel like an extra you might not need to do, let me regale you with some things about homemade stocks that make them so worth it.

- 1) It will make your soup, stew or pasta dish WAY better, and you control what goes in.
- 2) It's cheaper than store-bought and you use up your waste.
- 3) It's so simple, you can make it in the background while watching tv, or whatever, then freeze it for when you need it.

SHORTCUT IDEA! Sometimes you have to buy it, of course.

Cooks Illustrated rates these among the best commercial chicken broths you can buy:

- Swanson Certified Organic Free Range Chicken Broth
- Better than Bouillon Chicken Base
- Swanson Natural Goodness Chicken Broth
- Imagine Organic Free Range Chicken Broth
- Imagine Organic Free Range Chicken Broth.
- (FYI, Trader Joe's Free Range Chicken Broth got terrible reviews.)

Simple Chicken Stock

I don't always want to make stock the minute I have chicken bones, or a bunch of vegetables, so I pop them in bags in the freezer, adding more scraps of carrot tops, lettuce leaves, tops of turnips, green onions stalks, asparagus ends, and then, when I have time to make stock, I pull it all out, frozen, and dump it in the pot. Think of your stock as a way to use all those scraps – the ultimate

compost, if you don't have chickens.

One other thing, I use “salt to taste” in this PDF.

You are pushing flavor into six quarts of water, you will have to use more salt than you think. Do not fear the salt – you won't be sitting down and drinking six quarts of the stuff in one sitting.

If it tastes bland, add more salt. Taste as you go.



INGREDIENTS

6 quarts, water
1 chicken carcass (neck, bones, skin, fat, whatever you have)
1 onion, quartered
3 celery stalks
3 carrots, chopped in big chunks
3 bay leaves
3 cloves of garlic
A few sprigs of thyme, still on the branches
Salt to taste

PREPARING THE STOCK

Put your water into a stock pot and put it on the burner on high.

Add all your ingredients. I like to keep everything in big pieces so it's easier to strain them out of the soup later.

Bring the water to a boil, and then turn down to a very low simmer. There will be some foamy brown froth that comes to the top, just skim off the foam as you see it, and throw it away. Go do something fun. Turn down the heat to a simmer, and leave it there with a cover tilted slightly, for 4-5 hours.

When the stock is done, turn off the heat. Strain the stock through a fine mesh strainer. Let cool and then store in the fridge for 3-4 days, and in the freezer for up to 3 months.

NOTE: [Brodo: A Bone Broth Cookbook](#) is a great choice for diving into more kinds of stocks, broths and soup bases.

Simple Beef Stock

The trick to a simple beef stock is to roast the bones in oil and salt, and then, put them in water to simmer with whatever is hanging out in your fridge. It's the perfect fridge cleaner.

After the stock cooks, most recipes will have you pouring your stock through a fine mesh sieve to get out the veg, but I keep my pieces big and chunky so I can get most of the vegetables and herbs out with a wide mesh spoon.

It's easy, and there's no need to be fussy about pieces of herb in your stock, you aren't running a restaurant.



INGREDIENTS

5 pounds, beef bones & necks

Onion, halved

Carrots, halved or quartered

Olive oil

Salt

6 quarts water

Thyme, a handful still on the twig

Celery, whole stalks

Fennel fronds, one or two fronds

Whole black peppercorns, 1 tablespoon

Bay leaves, 6 whole

Leek tops, (one whole leek or the green parts of three or four)

Garlic, 6 cloves

Salt, to taste

PREPARING THE STOCK

Heat the oven to 450 degrees.

Arrange your bones, necks, onions and carrots on a cookie sheet or roasting pan. Slather with olive oil and salt. Roast the bones and vegetables for an hour to an hour and half, until they are brown and glistening.

Bring 6 quarts of water to boil in a large stock pot. When it's boiling and the bones and veg have been properly roasted, turn the pot down to a simmer and transfer the meat, bones, and veg to the stockpot.

Pour off the fat from the roasting pan and discard, or save it in the fridge and fry tomorrow's eggs in it.

To the simmering bones and veg, clean out your fridge. Add the thyme, celery, fennel fronds, whole black peppercorns, bay leaves, leek tops, garlic and salt.

If you get foamy scum on the top of your stock, skim it off and throw it out. Simmer as low as you can for about three hours. Skim, taste, add more salt. Skim, taste, add more salt as necessary.

You can strain your stock through a fine mesh sieve into a large bowl and discard the solids or do as I do and get in there with a slotted spoon and snake them out right into the garbage. Let stock cool on the stove.

When it's cool, put stock in Ziplock bags for freezing. The stock will last about four months in the freezer.

How to use leftover stock: Keep some stock in your fridge to add to pasta and rice dishes, soups, stews, or to use for

poaching eggs for your breakfast. Stock kept in a sealed container or bag will last for a week.

A fat layer will form over the top of your stock, leave it there, it will help preserve the stock. Also, don't throw it out when you cook with the broth. It's pure fat and useful for throwing in dishes for extra flavor. Eggs cooked in fat are especially glorious. I often skim the fat off the top and keep it in my freezer for when a dish needs a flavor boost. Don't be afraid of the fat!

Simple Shrimp Stock

When we have shrimp for dinner or a party, I always save the shells and keep them in a Ziplock bag in the freezer.



I also save fish bones and fish heads, after roasting a whole fish, or the body and head of a smoked trout or whitefish that I buy for a picnic. Yes, this sounds hoarder-ish. But fish scraps, lobster shells and heads are perfect for making flavorful broths. You can even get them straight from your fishmonger for pennies if you haven't been tucking them away.

And what you get for your trouble is the satisfaction of using every bit of the food you buy. Nothing is wasted. This stock is a perfect base for chowders and seafood stews. And it takes almost no time at all.

INGREDIENTS

1 pound, shrimp shells & heads (& any other scraps you've collected)
6 quarts, water
1 onion, quartered
4 stalks, celery
2 large carrots
4 cloves, garlic
3 bay leaves
1 teaspoon, dried peppercorns
1 handful of thyme (on the twigs)
1 handful of oregano (on the twigs)
Salt to taste

PREPARING THE STOCK

Fill a stock pot with water and heat on high until it boils.

Add the scraps and shells. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, skimming the gunk off the surface as needed. Do this for 30-45 minutes.

Take the stock off the heat and strain it through a fine mesh sieve to get out all the scraps. Or if everything is chunky enough, fish out the veg and scraps with a slotted spoon.

Let the stock cool and keep in fridge for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months. Or just use it in clam chowder immediately.

Simple Vegetable Broth

The trick to a flavorful vegetable broth (stock is from bones, broth is from deboned meat or vegetables) is simply to use lots of vegetables with serious flavor. There is no meat fat to really push the flavor so think vegetables with some pizzazz. I'm giving you some suggestions here but use whatever veg you have in your crisper.

And if you want to really boost the flavor, roast the veg for about 45 minutes in salt and oil on 400. Oh! and as always, don't be shy with the salt. Salt will make it tasty.



INGREDIENTS

2 onions, halved

3 carrots, cut into big chunks

Olive oil

Salt

5 to 6 quarts of water

4 celery stalks, whole

Two leeks, even the green part, roughly cut

A couple fronds (or leftover bulb)

Celery root

A handful of thyme, on the stalk

A few stalks of tarragon, on the stalk

A few stalks of oregano, on the stalk

4 bay leaves

1 teaspoon, whole peppercorns

(try mushrooms, parsnips...)

PREPARING THE STOCK

Heat the oven to 400 degrees.

Arrange your onions and carrots on a cookie sheet or roasting pan. Slather with olive oil and salt. Roast the vegetables for about 45 minutes until they are a little charred. Bring 6 quarts of water to boil in a large stock pot.

When it's boiling and the veg has been properly roasted, turn the pot down to a simmer and transfer the veg to the stockpot. Add the rest of the ingredients - celery, leeks, fennel, celery root, thyme, tarragon, oregano, bay leaves, peppercorns, and salt.

Simmer on low for about an hour. During that hour, taste, add more salt. Skim, add more salt as necessary.

You can strain your stock through a fine mesh sieve into a large bowl and discard the solids, or snake out the vegetables with a slotted spoon. After you removed all the veg, let the stock cool on the stove. When it's cool, put stock in ziplock bags for freezing. The stock will last about four months in the freezer. And in the fridge for a week or so.

Simple Vegetable Bouillon

I'm including this recipe for veggie bouillon because Vanessa is a vegetarian and if the creator of *First Grade Soup* is a vegetarian, you make some broths that work just for her. Keep the Queen happy! And this recipe will do it. It's packed with flavor.



You can make this bouillon, adapted from the *River Cottage Preserve* book by Pam Corbin, and keep it in your freezer for about six months. The amount of salt is intense but think of it as a concentrated little package of flavor to add to soups, stews, sauteed vegetables, casseroles, anything really.

The salt keeps the paste from freezing completely hard so you can put a big container full of it in your freezer and simply get in there with a tablespoon and scoop out what you need.

You can use the veg I suggested here, or sub in whatever you like - shallots, rutabagas, turnips, beets, mint, lovage or anything you like.

INGREDIENTS

3 leeks
1 fennel bulb
5 celery stalks
5 medium-sized carrots
12 sun-dried tomatoes
6 garlic cloves
a handful of parsley
a handful of cilantro
a handful of oregano
a handful of thyme
1 head of celery root
Salt, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 1 tablespoon

PREPARING THE BOUILLON

Run all ingredients through a food processor until you get a mixed-up blend of all the veg in a paste.

Add the salt, stir it all together.

Keep a bit of the bouillon in a jar in the fridge for cooking. Keep a larger amount in a container in the freezer. Or freeze in ice cube trays and keep frozen squares frozen in a zip lock bag to drop into soups, stews and pasta dishes. It will last about six months.

To make bouillon for soup, mix one heaping teaspoon into one cup of hot water. Then make something awesome.

THE SOUPS

A couple things to remember with classroom soup-making:

Safety: You will have to set up systems for making sure everything is safe, including allergies and potential allergies. Kids need to wash hands. Kids need to be monitored while handling raw meat. Kids need to be taught knife skills. You will also have to watch the parents if they are coming in to direct or participate in a cooking session. I had a parent nearly add raw veg to a bowl with raw chicken and had to leap in like Wonder Woman to stop cross-contamination without embarrassing him. If you can take a food safety class in your area, please do, or ask a chef friend for support in making sure no one gets sick. Small groups work best. Don't be afraid to give the kids guided access to hot oils, sharp knives and all the heat, steam and smoke that you can. They will burn themselves, cut themselves, and this is all normal. Prepare them. They will rise to the occasion.

Soup Choice: The recipes in this section are the soups the kids and their families chose. If I were creating this project anew and could choose the soups, I might choose different ones. But I wanted the kids to have as much say as possible. These soups reflect that. Vanessa had everyone discuss the soups in morning circle, maybe taste the hominy before preparation, or have the child talk about the soup, who makes it, is it connected to their family culturally? Lots of parents came in to help, but this isn't required. But you can also just make the soup and not integrate it into a lesson. Make it work for your people.

Tools: Organization is your best friend. Make lists: What are you cooking on? (electric burner, crockpot, propane burner, etc). What pots do you need? Oils? Bowls, ladles and spoons? Plastic boards for chopping? Knives? (We used real serrated steak knives. I find

it's harder to slice yourself with a serrated edge. But now there are some good kid cooking knives on the market and those work too.)

About Recipes: Choose recipes that can handle a lot of flexibility. Kids will try to measure but will likely not be accurate. I have included measurements in this PDF to give you an idea, but if I were writing this now, it would be more like a fistful of this, a speck of that. So come to this with a lot of flexible thinking. It's about the cooking as much as it is about eating soup!

A Warning of Sorts: Okay look, cooking with kids is messy and often harrowing, but what is cool about soup is that they have to taste and simmer and cut and boil and smell and taste. And they have to ask themselves these questions: Does it need salt? Why doesn't this taste right? What does it need? Can you smell it burning? Why simmer instead of boil? Can you tell it's ready by putting your hand over it? What is too much? Does this taste bitter or sweet? You want them to be intuitive about their cooking. They will rise to this too.

Remember: You may get lots of resistance when you first introduce something new. We got resistance from Clam Chowder and Cream of Tomato Soup, but we re-introduced them again later in the year and the kids went nuts. This is a marathon, not a sprint. Don't be discouraged!

Because here's what will happen...Soup day will come every Friday and pretty soon, the kids will get used to soup, and then excited about soup, and then soup is a thing, their thing and we are soup-eating fools. Which is what you wanted all along. :)

PS: And don't forget the teachers, some of our most devoted eaters were faculty and staff. The kids LOVED cooking for them.

Leftover Turkey Pozole



Pozole (poh-soh-lay) was our first soup.

It's a Mexican soup dating way back to the Mesoamerican people. It's old - so old that the first incarnations of Pozole were served with human prisoners as the protein. Eventually, the soup featured pork because - and I have no authority on this - pork tastes like people. Who knew?

Pozole is made with hominy (corn soaked in an alkali solution or lime, de-hulled, de-germed, keeping it bacteria-free and storable for long periods).

Corn was sacred to the Mesoamerican peoples and they believed that humans were constructed out of corn by their Gods. So using corn and the flesh of people sacrificed to the Gods had all kinds of important significance. The kids found the

cannibalism stuff equally gross and fascinating.

We subbed out the human flesh/pork and used Turkey since we were cooking right after Thanksgiving. I used the Turkey carcass to make the stock. And the kids loved the taste of hominy, the familiar flavors of corn in a whole new package.

Note: Check out Youtube videos of [Mexican Chef Patt Jinich making her mothers red pozole](#) for inspiration!

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup olive oil
½ red onion, chopped
3 cloves, garlic, minced
2 plum tomatoes, diced
6 cups, turkey stock (make Simple Chicken Stock, & sub in turkey carcasses for chicken bones)
1 28-ounce can, white hominy, drained
1 28-ounce can, tomato puree
1 tablespoon, fresh oregano, chopped
A handful of cilantro
Add peppers (guajillo or ancho)
2 teaspoons, ground cumin
½ teaspoon, smoked paprika
Salt & Pepper to taste
Cheddar cheese, avocado, thin radish slices, chopped
cilantro, a squeeze or two of lime, for garnish
Flour tortillas, for serving

PREPARING THE MEAL

Heat oil in a large pot on hot plate, getting it as close to medium-low as possible.

Chop onion, garlic, tomatoes. Add onions to the pot first, stir frequently while they sauté, about 5 minutes.

Add garlic, saute another two minutes, stir so that the garlic doesn't burn. Add diced fresh tomatoes and stir until softened, about 2 minutes longer. Add turkey broth, beans, hominy, tomato puree, oregano and cilantro. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes.

Turn off the heat. Add leftover Thanksgiving turkey to the pot.

Either make bowls of soup with your choice of garnishes or set them out and have people make their own. Serve with warm flour tortillas.

Devon's Pho

Vietnamese Beef Noodle Soup, or Pho Bo in Vietnamese (pronounced “fuh”), really has flavors that are unusual for kids who don't regularly eat Vietnamese food, so it was a great way to turn the class onto new flavors (star anise, ginger, cumin, coriander, cloves) in an old package (clear-broth soup with slabs of beef).



Pho is traditionally known as a hawker dish that was served by street vendors near Hanoi who carried their kitchen mobile set-ups on carrying poles. It has its roots in Vietnamese culture and cuisine, but became even more popular after the French brought in better beef, which provided excellent bones for broth.

This aside, the kids loved listening to Devon and his dad show photos of their latest trip to Hanoi, including lots of happy kids slurping up big bowls of noodles and broth with Devon and his

INGREDIENTS - PHO STOCK

1 large onion, quartered
1 nub, ginger, about the size your finger, tip to knuckle
6 pounds, beef bones
4 quarts, water
¼ cup fish sauce
1 tablespoon, coriander seeds
1 tablespoon, fennel seeds
4 star anise, whole
1 stick, cinnamon
4 cloves, whole 4 big cloves of garlic, smashed
A handful of cilantro, shredded
1 chunk, yellow rock sugar (or a teaspoon of cane sugar)
Salt to taste

INGREDIENTS - MEAL

1 pound, chuck steak, (or london broil, flank, sirloin, whatever you like) sliced thin, against the grain
1 package, rice vermicelli (you can also use Udon if you like a thicker noodle)
¼ pound, shiitake mushrooms (optional)
A handful of bean sprouts (optional)
1 chili pepper, diced for finishing
2 limes, cut into wedges, for finishing
More shredded cilantro, for garnish
Sriracha, for people who like it hot (optional)

PREPARING THE STOCK

Char the onions and ginger by putting them on a cookie sheet, brushing them with a little oil, and putting them under a high broiler. When one side chars, flip them and char the other side. The whole process shouldn't take more than 10 minutes.

(I like to par-boil my bones for 15 minutes. Take them off the heat, rinse out the pot, refill and bring new water to a boil.

Get out your big stock pot, add water, add your beef bones, the charred ginger and onions, and the rest of the ingredients for the stock. Bring it to a fierce boil. Turn it down to simmer. Cover with a tilted lid, so that a little air can escape, and simmer on low for 2 hours or so. While the stock is simmering, make sure you keep tasting, adding salt, gauging if you need more of anything. You will probably need more salt. Do not fear the salt. Keep tasting until you like what you taste.

Do not skip the fish sauce. Fish sauce makes nearly everything taste better. It can be your new best friend.

PREPARING THE MEAL

While the stock is simmering, get your garnishes and ad-ins ready. Slice your steak. The stock will be hot enough to cook the thin slices through, so cut them in slivery slices and put them out raw.

I like to use chuck because it's kinda fatty, always tender, and it's good but moderately cheap. Or i buy chuck pre-sliced in Chinatown.

Next the noodles, follow the directions on your package, with vermicelli, the strands are so thin, they only require that you dunk them in hot tap water for 15 minutes or so. Put them out after they get a good dunking and go limp. I add the Shitakes to the broth for the last few minutes just to make sure they're cooked through.

Put out your pepper, cilantro, Sriracha, and lime wedges. The soup should be boiling hot when you bring it to the table – remember it has to cook the meat.

Let the kids make their own bowls, ladling stock and dropping in the meat, noodles, and veg. They can choose what add-ins they like, even a bit of Sriracha if they like heat, and a good squirt of lime.

Note: I highly recommend Andrea Nguyen's ["The Pho Cookbook: Easy to Adventurous Recipes for Vietnam's Favorite Soup and Noodle"](#) which wasn't available when we did *First Grade Soup*, but is now and contains some fabulous variations on the dish.



Justin's Hearty Chicken Soup



You really can't beat a chicken soup for popularity.

This soup, a family favorite from Justin's dad, James, lives up to its name—hearty. It has rice, potatoes and beans and big fat chunks of chicken, so it's a meal, not just a soup.

Serve it with a crusty loaf of warm bread, and a tossed salad, and there's your dinner.

The great thing about this soup is that it's almost a one pot meal. After the cutting was done - these kids love hacking things up with steak knives - we all stood around the pot and just hucked things in. It was that simple. Just gather your ingredients and put them all

in a pot to cook. This might have been the most do-able soup of the year and certainly got raves from the kids.

Don't be afraid to start your school cooking year with a soup the kids recognize. It's a great way to develop trust that this soup thing is going to be something tasty and fun.

INGREDIENTS

3 quarts, chicken stock
3 bay leaves
½ tablespoon, Italian seasoning
½ tablespoon poultry seasoning (detailed below)
1 medium onion, diced
2 large carrots, sliced thin in rounds
4 celery stalks (ideally from the heart, including leaves)
sliced thin
3 large potatoes, diced
½ teaspoon, black pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 8 ounce can, tomato puree
1 ½ cups, uncooked rice (basmati, jasmine, brown,
white, whatever you like)
2 15-ounce cans, black beans (or small white beans,
kidney beans, whatever you prefer)
Chicken breasts, about three, un-cooked and diced into
1” cubes
Salt, to taste
A handful of fresh parsley, for garnish

PREPARING THE MEAL

Combine all ingredients in a large stock pot, except for the rice, beans, chicken and parsley. Bring to a boil and turn down to a simmer.

Let it cook on low for 15 minutes. Add rice, beans and chicken, cover the pot and simmer for another 15-20 until rice is cooked.

Serve piping hot in bowls, garnished with a little chopped parsley.

HOMEMADE POULTRY & ITALIAN SEASONING

You can easily buy pre-made poultry seasoning and



Italian seasoning in the supermarket. but if you are so inclined, you can buy dried herbs in bulk and make it from scratch and it takes minutes.

Notice there is no salt in either recipe. That allows you to control the salt while you cook, unlike when you use commercial seasonings.

INGREDIENTS - POULTRY SEASONING

- 1 tablespoon, dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon, dried sage
- 1 tablespoon, dried rosemary

1 tablespoon, dried oregano (or marjoram, they are cousins, but oregano has stronger flavor)

- 1 tablespoon, crushed celery seed
- 1 tablespoon, ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon, dried onion
- 1 tablespoon, dried garlic
- 1 tablespoon, dried flat leaf parsley

INGREDIENTS - ITALIAN SEASONING

- 1 tablespoon, dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon, dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon, dried basil
- 1 tablespoon, dried rosemary
- 1 tablespoon, dried flat leaf parsley

PREPARING THE SEASONING

Put all the ingredients into a Ziplock bag and shake it up until it's mixed. Use immediately or store with the bag sealed in a cool, dark place.

Kiley's Matzo Ball Soup



Kiley and Kristin's Matzo Ball Soup was a huge hit. The kids loved cracking the eggs, getting their hands all messy in the Matzo meal and egg mixture, and forming it all into balls. There was so much to do in this soup.

We used the box ball mix in class, which is easy to use and produces a light fluffy ball and you can move outside the directions and doctor the recipe by adding seltzer, schmaltz, whatever you like. But I'm giving you the recipe here I use when I make this soup at home, which is adapted only slightly from the one at [SmittenKitchen](#)

This recipe is my answer to the age-old question of whether it's better to make your Matzo ball a floater (an airy, cloud-like ball that floats lightly on the broth) or a sinker (a heavy, meaty ball skulking like a monster at the bottom of the pot) I like floaters and I like to use a lot of chicken fat (schmaltz) so I'm also giving you the recipe here to make your own schmaltz. It's pretty cool to cook your eggs, roast veg in it, fry your pancakes and latkes in it, caramelize onions, you can even use it as a mayo base.

INGREDIENTS - MATZO BALLS

1/2 cup matzo meal
2 eggs, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons chicken fat (or vegetable oil)
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons seltzer

INGREDIENTS - SOUP

3 quarts, chicken stock
1 carrot, thinly sliced
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
A few sprigs of thyme, for garnish

PREPARING THE SOUP

Mix all matzo ball ingredients in a bowl. Cover the bowl and pop it in the fridge for 20 minutes.

Bring your stock to a brisk boil in a good-sized stock pot. And as soon as it does, turn the heat down to medium-low.

While the stock is coming to a boil, take out your chilled bowl of batter, and have the kids get their hands wet. Wet hands help the batter not to stick to fingers. Kids love rolling balls.

Pick up enough batter to make a 1-inch in diameter ball in the palm of your hand. Roll the batter until it forms a loose ball. Set aside. Keep going until you rolled all the batter into balls, then one at a time, gently plop them in the simmering stock. Cover the pot and cook them for 30 minutes or so. About 15 minutes in, add the carrot and celery pieces.

When it is cooked, ladle your soup and a couple of matzo balls into each bowl. Top with a little extra thyme. Eat.

SCHMALTZ

This recipe is adapted from the Schmaltz recipe from Michael and Donna Ruhlman's brilliant, [The Book of Schmaltz: A Love Song to Forgotten Fat](#) app. There are a million tasty things in it, and a bunch of ways to use fat to make your food taste way better. It's worth every penny.

INGREDIENTS

Chicken skin & fat, from two chickens, finely chopped (the smaller the better for rendering)

½ cups, water

1 large onion, finely chopped

PREPARATION

Put the chicken pieces in a sauce pan over medium-high heat. Add enough water to cover the chicken and cover. Bring it to a boil and then turn it back down to a low-

low simmer (you want the meat to render golden, not fry into squidgy brown turds).

It's going to simmer very low, for an hour and a half (maybe more if you are using extra chicken) but you'll have to get in there and stir it every 15 minutes or so to make sure it isn't sticking or burning.

When the water has cooked off and the chicken is turning more golden, after about 60-90 minutes, add the onions.

Cook everything together, still on low, stirring occasionally. The chicken should be clear and yellow, not brown and burnt looking, so if it looks like it's getting dark brown, turn down the heat, keep stirring, and watch it carefully.

When the onion is cooked through and melty and the chicken is golden, run the rendered fat through a fine mesh strainer. Keep it in a container in the fridge for a day or two or freeze for longer storage.

Use it in your matzo balls or fry potatoes or eggs in it.
Fatty yes, but the good kind that your body wants.

What to do with the gribenes? The little golden onion
and skin pieces - save them.

Lay them out to drain of residual fat on a paper towel
and keep them in an airtight container in the fridge for
up to a week or frozen or frozen for longer storage.
These little leftover bits are like Bacos (but better) -
great for giving your salads a crunch and sprinkled over
eggs. And again, nothing, not even lowly skin, is wasted.



Jacob's Won-Ton Soup



The fun thing about making wonton soup is the folding of the won-tons. Kids, as Jacob's dad found out, are extremely adept at it. Show them once how the folding goes and they are moving out wontons like a factory in Beijing.

If you do not know how to fold a wonton, you are not alone, but there are some great tutorials on YouTube and all you have to do is Google, [“How to fold a wonton”](#) and you'll get all the help you need.

Pork is usually the popular meat filling of choice, but feel free to sub in ground beef, ground lamb, ground veal, ground chicken, or chopped shrimp. For a vegetarian option try minced tofu, napa cabbage, carrots and red pepper. Just remember to taste and adjust seasonings for new ingredients.

FOR THE FILLING

½ pound, ground pork
2 scallions, finely minced
1 tablespoon, soy sauce
2 tablespoons, fish sauce
A handful of cilantro, chopped
A nub of ginger, finely chopped
1 teaspoon, rice vinegar
¼ teaspoon, sugar
½ teaspoon sesame oil

FOR THE SLURRY

2 tablespoons cornstarch
3 tablespoons water

FOR THE MEAL

Filling
3 quarts chicken stock
1 package, wonton wrappers, covered with a damp towel

Slurry

Chives, chopped, for garnish

PREPARING THE MEAL

In a large bowl, have the kids get in there with their hands and mix the pork, scallion, soy sauce, fish sauce, cilantro, ginger, rice vinegar, cornstarch, sugar and sesame oil. If you can, let it sit for a few hours in the fridge to get all the flavors mixing. make sure kids wash up after handling raw meat (and tell them not to eat it. Seriously. Tell them.)

Heat your stock over medium heat until it boils, then turn it down to a simmer.

Fold your wontons as directed by your YouTube video of choice. The most important thing here is to not over-stuff the wontons, a small teaspoonful of filling will do the trick. Set your finished wontons on a platter in one layer and cover loosely with slightly damp cloth to prevent drying out. Repeat with remaining.

When the wontons are ready to go in the pot, turn up the heat on the stock to medium-high. Add the wontons, let them cook about 7 minutes.

They are done when they float at the top of the stock and the pork is cooked through. Pour stock into bowls and ladle in a few wontons. Garnish with chives.

Just a note - if you are going to serve this soup for leftovers the next day, spoon out the wontons and keep them in the fridge in a dish, lightly covered with plastic wrap. The wrappers have a lot of starch and if they sit over night in the stock, they'll make the stock cloudy.

To serve the next day, simply reheat the stock on medium-high flame and drop the wontons in at the last minute for a quick re-heat.



Note: there are lots of ways to fold wontons, so let the kids pick. Or pick one that is easy enough for the kids at their age and skill level. You have options.

Jashcelyn's Celery Pesto Soup with Barley



You just never know how kids are going to take to a soup, but they liked this one, pesto and all.

The pesto here refers to how the paste is made, not what it's in it. No pine nuts, basil, and parmesan in this one. This pesto is garlic, celery leaves, olive oil and salt all bashed and banged together by little kid hands in a mortar and pestle. So the pesto is about the method of creation, not the flavors.

I adapted this soup from a recipe at [101Cookbooks](https://www.101cookbooks.com/) and was thrilled to have Jashcelyn and her mom

Jocelyn join us for the cooking shortly after they moved here from Texas. It was a great way for all of us to get to know each other.

This soup is a wonderful break from noodle and rice soups. The kids loved the barley. It's soft and chewy and completely loveable. This soup is made better by the celery pesto but is certainly damned good without it. To make the pesto, you'll have to buy celery with leaves.

INGREDIENTS - PESTO

1 cup, lightly packed celery leaves
2 cloves, garlic
1/3 cup, olive oil
A pinch of salt

Have the kids mash up all the ingredients in a mortar and pestle until it forms a paste. Banging things is fun.

INGREDIENTS - SOUP

1 large onion, chopped into 1/2 inch chunks
2 large potatoes, chopped into 1/2 inch chunks
4 medium carrots, chopped into 1/2 inch chunks
2 bunches of celery, with leaves, chopped into 1/2 inch chunks
2 quarts, chicken or vegetable stock
3 tablespoons, olive oil
3 cloves, garlic, chopped fine
2 cups, cooked barley (make as per directions on the package) Celery pesto and parmesan cheese, for garnish

PREPARING THE MEAL

In a large stockpot, over medium-high heat, add the olive oil and let it heat up for 30 seconds. Add the onion, potato, carrots, and celery chunks. Throw a couple big pinches of salt in there. Let that cook for 7-10 minutes, until the veg are soft. Add the garlic, let that sit in there for about a minute.

Add the stock. Let it all come to a boil and then bring it back down to a simmer. Let the veg cook in there for another 5-7 minutes, which should get all the veg just barely cooked through. (Do not over-cook the vegetables or they will turn to mush on you.)

Stir in the already-cooked barley (bring that from home pre-prepped) just as the potatoes and carrots are getting done. When the barley is hot and the veg are cooked-through, about 3 minutes, turn off the heat and ladle soup into bowls. Top each bowl with a tablespoonful of the celery pesto, and a little grating of cheese.

Nico's Ring Noodle Soup



Nico's favorite soup was Lipton's Ring Noodle Soup. In fact, it was the only soup he would eat. Nico had a real aversion to certain textures and tastes. His mom, Jessica, and I talked about it and we decided to try and make a version of the box soup.

Instead of creating an elaborate soup, which Nico didn't want, with floating chunks of vegetable and weird ingredients, the kids made stock from scratch, which meant getting their hands on the chicken carcasses, bones, necks and feet and really understanding what makes a stock, and also that in cooking, nothing is wasted, not even the gross parts. Feet!

Nico and Jessica's soup is pretty simple, but that is also its genius - nothing but homemade stock and ring noodles.

In the end, Nico didn't eat his own soup, but he talked about it in the circle, cooked it and got to watch his whole class kill multiple bowls of the soup he loved.

THE STOCK

6 quarts, water (you'll have stock leftover)
1 chicken carcass (neck, head and feet, if available)
1 onion, quartered
3 celery stalks, whole or halved
3 carrots, chopped into big chunks
3 bay leaves
3 cloves, garlic
a few sprigs of thyme, leaves still on the branches
Salt & pepper to taste

You will want to start this soup in the morning for eating in the afternoon.

Put your water into a pot and put it on the burner on high. Add all your ingredients. I like to keep everything in big pieces so it's easier to strain them out of the soup later. Bring the water to a boil, and then turn down to a very low simmer. There will be some foamy brown froth that comes to the top, just skim off the foam as you see it, and throw it away. Go do something fun, simmer for 4 hours.

When the stock is done, turn off the heat. Use a big hand strainer to get out all the meat and veg. If you want, strain the finer pieces through a fine mesh strainer.

If you want you can store it in the fridge for 3-4 days, and in the freezer for up to 3 months.

THE SOUP

2 quarts, chicken stock
1 box, ring noodles
oyster crackers (optional)

When the stock has simmered long enough, turn up the heat to medium-high. Add a box of ring noodles to the stock pot. Let the noodles cook until done, about 10 minutes. Ladle into bowls. Serve straight up or with oyster crackers.

Ava's Scottish Tattie Soup



It's always a privilege to cook with elder women of families because they've made soups like this so many times, it feels timeless. Their hands are just so sure of how to do it all. It is second-nature soup. That was the case when Ava's Scottish grandmother and great grandmother braved the four flights of public-school stairs to make this Scottish soup with the kids.

This is a peasant soup and is purposefully made with the most humble ingredients - potatoes, carrots and leeks. The stock can be water with a ham hock thrown in, water with four or five rashers of bacon thrown in, beef stock (our choice) or just the water the vegetables are cooked in.

Traditionally, nettles from the yard were thrown in just at the end of the cooking. Don't have nettles lying around? Throw in a couple handfuls of roughly chopped parsley before serving. Parsley is a great way to get kids to like 'the green' in foods.

INGREDIENTS

2 quarts beef stock (or water, or water and ham hock)
3 large leeks, sliced
6 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
4 large carrots, sliced
2 quarts, beef stock
Salt to taste
A bunch of parsley
Crusty bread (optional)

PREPARING THE MEAL

Get out a large stock pot and bring your water or stock to boil. Turn the pot down to a medium simmer, have the kids chop the veg, and add the leeks, potatoes and carrots.

Let the soup simmer, covered, for about an hour. Make sure you taste and salt as necessary, especially if you are using water instead of stock. Remove the hock or bacon rashers if you are using those. You can cut the pork off the bone and put it right back in the soup if you like, as I'm sure most peasants in Scotland did in the old days, if they were lucky enough to have it.

When the potatoes and carrots are cooked through, throw in your handful of parsley, if you want. Ladle into bowls and serve with crusty bread.

Nabrakissa's Cream of Roasted Garlic + Tomato Soup



We tried this cream of tomato soup twice. The first time, earlier in the year, the teachers went batty for it (I think it's still Vanessa's favorite) but the kids were freaked out by the creaminess, the tomato, the intensely unapologetic garlic. And the first time we didn't make a crouton. Serious fail.

When Jessica said Cream of Tomato was Nabrakissa's favorite, Vanessa knew we had a chance to hit them again, only this time later in the year when they were much more adventurous and trying new soups was old hat. Also remember that when kids don't like another kid's soup, there can be hurt feelings, so don't be afraid to re-introduce.

We also included a crouton and they got to use the immersion blender, so the second time around was an exciting splatter-filled, crunchy expedition. Also, and this goes without saying, for this soup, the better the tomatoes, the better the soup.

FOR THE ROASTED TOMATOES

4 pounds, ripe tomatoes of your choice, quartered

8 tablespoons, olive oil

10 cloves, garlic, sliced thin

a handful of finely chopped thyme

A few good pinches of salt

Heat the oven to 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Lay the tomato pieces, skin-side down, out on a cookie sheet.

Pour the olive oil over the tomatoes, make sure all the pieces get oiled. Sprinkle with slivers of garlic and salt. Roast in the oven for 4 to 6 hours. You should take them out every hour and a half or so and just give them a little hit of salt if they need it. When they are done, they should've shrunk quite a bit from their original size, but they will still be soft and juicy.

When they are done, take the tomatoes out of the oven and allow them to cool. You can use them immediately

for the soup or let them sit in the fridge a day or two and they will be even more flavorful.

PAN-FRIED CROUTONS

1-day old baguette

6 tablespoons, butter

Cut your bread into 1" cubes. Melt two tablespoons of butter in a sauté pan. Add enough bread cubes to sit in a single layer in the pan. Turn them over and get them all buttered up. Let them sit there and brown in the butter. Don't play with them! When they start to get golden and crunchy on one side, flip them over to the other side with a spatula.

When that side is golden and crunchy, remove them to a paper towel to drain a bit. Add more butter and more bread cubes until you've done all the bread. If you are keeping them for later, let them come to room temperature before you put them in an airtight

container and put them in the fridge. This will keep them crunchy!

FOR THE SOUP

Roasted garlic tomatoes

½ cup chicken stock

2 cups cream

Croutons

A little thyme for garnish

If you have an immersion blender, put the roasted tomatoes, garlic and all, into a stockpot and pulse the tomatoes into a puree. If not, pour the tomatoes into a blender or food processor and pulse until you have a thick puree (but no big chunks of garlic) and transfer the puree to your pot.

On a medium heat, warm the puree, tasting and salting, if necessary. Add your chicken stock and your cream. If the soup is too thick, add more stock. Too thin, add more cream. Serve warm in bowls with a sprig of thyme and a crouton or two.

Edie's Super-Famous New England Clam Chowder

This was, by far, the hardest sell of all the soups this year. Clams and cream. And of course, Edie who adores this soup more than just about any kind of soup on the planet, was heart-broken that kids weren't going ga-ga over "her soup." But like I told her, not every six-year-old loves a clam.



Some kids did love clams though (more than you would think) and they all loved shucking them. They also loved making the clam shells talk and do puppet shows.

This recipe is adapted from *Bon Appetit* and I always get a really thick, hearty cream base out of it, which is just the way chowder should be. Just a note, if you are making cream soups for a class or a large number of people, know you have to make a lot more than you think. I nearly didn't have enough and making more thick, seafood cream base is no easy task when 20 hungry kids are asking you every 30 seconds when the soup will be ready.

INGREDIENTS

8 pounds, cherrystone clams, scrubbed
4 cups, water
1 tablespoon, butter
1 cup, water or shrimp stock
½ pound, bacon, chopped up into ½” pieces
1 medium-sized onion, minced
3 stalks, celery, minced
2 cloves, garlic, minced
4 large potatoes, chopped into ½” cubes
2 tablespoons, thyme, chopped
2 tablespoons, chives, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons, water
2 cups cream
Extra chives, chopped, for garnish (optional)
Oyster crackers (optional)

PREPARING THE MEAL

Bring 4 cups of water to boil in a large stock pot. When it is boiling, add clams. Cover and cook for 8-10 minutes, until the clams open up. Use a slotted spoon to remove all the clams and put them on a cookie sheet. Save the clam broth in the pot.

When the clams are cool enough to handle, take out the clam meat and discard the shells (or let the kids make puppets out of them) Chop the clam meat into bite-size pieces and reserve for later.

Strain the clam broth through a fine mesh sieve to get out clam shell pieces and any fragments and keep it on the side. Melt the butter in your stock pot and add the bacon. Cook until the fat is rendered, and the bacon gets brown and slightly crisp. This will take about 7 minutes. Add the onion, celery, and garlic. Cook about 10 minutes, until the onions get translucent.

Add in the reserved clam broth (you can sub in clam juice, about 8 cups, if you need to) Add in the potatoes,



thyme and bay leaf. Bring everything up to a boil, and then reduce the heat to low. Simmer until potatoes are done, about 25 minutes. While the potatoes are cooking,

put your cornstarch into water and make a slurry, this is going to thicken your chowder.

Smash a few of the potatoes against the side of the pot to release some of the starches, this will help thicken the chowder. (If you see you have a little too much stock you can pour off a little and reserve it in a bowl. You can always add it back if you need to thin it out)

Turn up the heat to a boil and stir in the slurry and the cream. The soup will slowly thicken. Remove from heat. Fish out the bay leaves. Stir in reserved clams. Taste and add salt and pepper, if necessary. Serve in bowls with chives and oyster crackers as garnish.

NOTE: Do not sleep on the oyster crackers! They were a big hit.

Randall's Island Water Creature Gumbo



I thought Gumbo would be the hardest sell of all - it was totally Vanessa's idea - but, in fact, it was one of the easiest.

The kids were in the midst of studying mollusks and all kinds of water creatures on their field trips to Randall's Island and so oysters were already in their heads.

This is a take on Emeril Lagasse's *Classic Seafood Gumbo*. It has everything - sausage, fish, crab, shrimp and oysters. I omitted the dark beer, only because I thought the kids would try to drink it when I wasn't looking. I also got cold feet and didn't put those big gloppy oysters in every bowl.

Boy, was that a mistake. Thanks to getting them used to clams in their chowder, they transitioned easily to oysters. The kids were fighting over them. Lesson learned. You just never know what they'll like or won't like, so don't under-estimate them!

INGREDIENTS

¾ cup of vegetable oil
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 green peppers, chopped
celery
4 stalks of celery, chopped
4 cloves, garlic, chopped
2 quarts, shrimp stock (or chicken stock)
A handful of thyme, chopped
3 bay leaves
1 tablespoon, Worcestershire Sauce
Salt to taste
½ teaspoon cayenne
2 blue crabs, whole
1 pound, catfish, cut into 2” slabs
1 tablespoon, Emeril’s Original Essence (store-bought
or see recipe below for scratch recipe)
2 cups, shucked oysters with their liquid
¼ cup, parsley, chopped
1 bunch of scallions, chopped
White rice, for serving with the Gumbo

PREPARING THE MEAL

The first and most important thing with gumbo is to make the roux. Add the oil to a stock pot, heat it over medium heat. When the oil is hot, about 5 minutes, add the flour. Stir the two together with a spoon until it forms a thick paste, that’s the roux. This should take about 25 minutes. Keep a watch on it and keep stirring so it doesn’t burn. The color will change. As it cooks, it’ll go to a tannish brown, that’s good.

When the color is, as Emeril says, “chocolate milk” add the onions, peppers, celery and stir them into the roux. After about five minutes, add your garlic. Cook for another minute. Add your stock. Then, add the thyme, bay leaves and the crabs.

Turn up your heat and bring the gumbo to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cover and simmer on low for 1 hour, skimming any foam off the top.

While the soup simmers, season your catfish with 1 tablespoon of Essence (store bought or see recipe

below) Put the shrimp and catfish into the soup and cook for 2 minutes. Add the oysters to the pot and cook for another 5 minutes. Taste and season with salt and pepper or more cayenne, as necessary.

Garnish with chopped parsley and scallions and serve over rice.



Emeril's Essence from Scratch

You can buy Emeril's Essence in the spice aisle at any supermarket, but he's also published his exact recipe, so you can also make your own. Make this spice mix and keep it in your cupboard to season meat, veg, soups and stews.

- 2 ½ tablespoons, paprika
- 2 tablespoons, salt
- 2 tablespoons, garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon, freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon, onion powder
- 1 tablespoon, cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon, dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon, dried thyme

Combine all the ingredients together and stir them well. Keep them in a Ziplock bag in a cool, dark place.

Lael's Turkey Sausage & Eggplant Chili Grosso



This non-soup was the first chili we had all year. We thought they were ready for a little heat, so we didn't dumb it down for them. Chili also has a lot of pieces in it, so you don't want to introduce chili early.

They also got to go to town with a garlic press, which means they had permission to squish things.

I'm not gonna lie - we found some big chunks of half-squished garlic cloves in the chili. We ate around them. This was also their first time with eggplant but by June, they were ready for anything.

This recipe is from Lael's Grandmother and supervised by Allison, Lael's mom, who is kind of a blast in the classroom kitchen. It was a great way to say good-bye to *First Grade Soup*.

INGREDIENTS

1 pound, turkey sausage
2 teaspoon, olive oil
1 eggplant, chopped into 1" inch cubes
1 green bell pepper, chopped into 1" cubes
1 large onion, minced
2 celery stalks, chopped into 1" cubes
4 cloves, garlic, minced
Salt to taste
16 ounce, can kidney beans, drained
16 ounce, can black beans, drained
28 ounce. can tomato puree
2 cups, chicken stock
½ teaspoon, cayenne
1 ½ teaspoon, chili powder
1 bunch, cilantro, chopped
Lime juice, from 1 lime
Brown rice, cooked, for serving
Extra cilantro and lime for garnish
Sour cream (optional)
Avocado, sliced thin (optional)

PREPARING THE MEAL

In a large saute pan, add the olive oil and heat over medium flame. Add the sausage and brown. (If it's pre-cooked sausage, you are just browning the outside. If it's uncooked, figure cooking the sausage over medium-heat for 15 minutes or until the inside is no longer pink) Remove the sausage when cooked and set aside.

Over medium-low heat, add in the eggplant, pepper, onion and celery to the fatty oil. Stir and let the vegetables get soft, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, cook another minute. Add a little pinch of salt. Add the beans, tomato puree, stock, cayenne and chili powder and let simmer for 15 minutes.

When the soup is ready, stir in the cilantro and squeeze in the juice of one lime. Taste for salt and pepper. Serve in bowls with a little cilantro and squirt of lime to garnish, or with a big dollop of sour cream and sliced avocado.

Cold Ginger-Carrot Summer Soup

The whole point of this soup was simply to show the kids soup can be cold, and perfect for the warm days of June.



But we ran out of Soup Days, still I wanted to include it here, because it's a breeze to make. The kids will be used to the texture, the familiar taste of the carrots, but it's also tinged with ginger, something familiar, but still sometimes a little zingy for them, and they'll still get a bang out of the cold factor. They also get to work the food processor, and kids love bashing things up with machinery.

This is also a beautiful make-ahead showcase for all the good finds at the farmers market. If you are a loather of heavy cream, feel free to leave it out, and supplement with torn up bread blended into the soup to make it vegan and thick. Garnish with a dash of cream, pepitas and chives or parsley, or anything you like that gives color and texture. Or even better, let the kids choose from garnish options!

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons, butter
6 large carrots, peeled & chopped
1 large onion, chopped
A small nub of ginger, grated
Salt, to taste
A handful of thyme, chopped
1 quart, chicken stock
2 cups, heavy cream

PREPARING THE MEAL

Melt butter in a stock pot over medium-low heat and add carrots and onion. Let them cook until soft about 5 minutes. Add thyme. After the veg are soft add the stock. Turn up the heat to medium-high and let it come to a boil. Turn down to a low simmer.

Let the whole thing simmer, covered for 15 minutes, until the carrots are cooked. If you need to add more stock, do so. If you have too much after the carrots have cooked, pour off enough broth into a reserve bowl so that the stock just covers the veg.

Puree the vegetables and stock with an immersion blender, if you have one. Add the cream. If it's too thick, add some of the stock back in. Cool in fridge until serving. Serve in bowls garnished with chopped parsley or a little thyme.

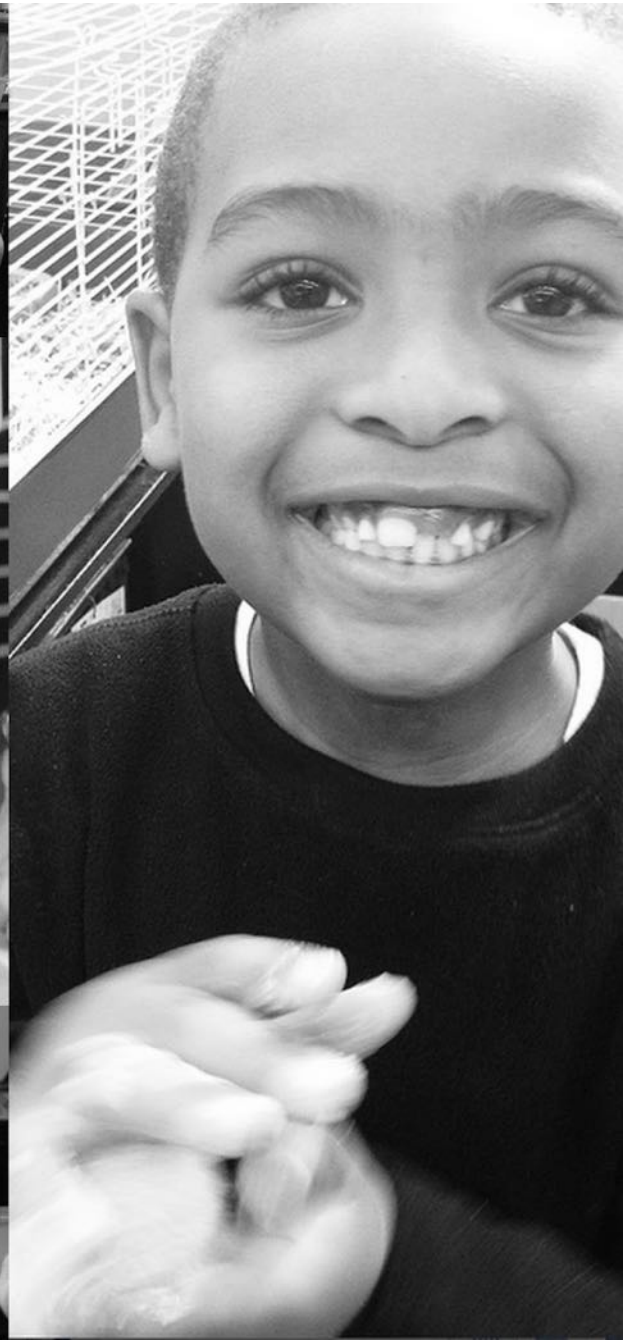
Cooking with the First Grade Class of Central Park East II,
2012-13, East Harlem, NYC.

(These kids are graduating high school in 2024)











A little about Kim.

Kim Foster is a James Beard Award-winning writer who writes about food at the intersection of poverty, incarceration, family separation and trauma.

Her book, [The Meth Lunches: Food and Longing in an American City](#) with St. Martin's Press, is out October 10, 2023 and is available for pre-order.

You can also find Kim at her newsletter: KimFoster.Substack.com and on IG [@KimInTheWest](#).

This is also me. I look much crazier when cooking with kids. And this is just fine. I hope this PDF gets you into classrooms cooking with kids. - Kim

